



A century of  
cooperation  
protecting our  
shared waters

## 2009: The Year of Our Shared Waters

### The 1909 Boundary Waters Treaty A Centennial Celebration in Niagara

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#### Introduction

In June 2009, the cross-border Niagara region will be the location for an historic binational event when the International Joint Commission (IJC), the Governments of Canada and the United States, and the Niagara 10 Leaders (the Cities of Buffalo, Niagara Falls New York and Niagara Falls Ontario, the Towns of Fort Erie and Niagara on the Lake, the Villages of Lewiston and Youngstown, Erie County, Niagara County, and the Regional Municipality of Niagara) **host the Centennial celebration of the 1909 Boundary Waters Treaty (BWT) at Niagara Falls on June 13, 2009.**

The Centennial celebration will be held during Boundary Waters Week (BWW), a regional initiative scheduled to run from June 5 – June 14, 2009. Boundary Waters Week was conceived to extend the engagement, reach and benefits of the many and diverse Centennial activities currently being planned. Throughout Boundary Waters Week, the Niagara River Corridor will be host to water-themed conferences and festivals, exhibitions and performances, guided hikes, and tours -- climaxing with the official celebration of the Boundary Waters Treaty on Saturday, June 13, 2009 at Niagara Falls. Each of the Niagara 10 municipalities will be host to a Centennial activity over the course of Boundary Waters Week.

The Boundary Waters Treaty Centennial Celebration Committee is being Co-Chaired by Canadian Consul General Steve Brereton and U.S. Consul General John Nay; the Honorary Co-Chairs include: Rick Dykstra, Member of Parliament; Louise Slaughter, Member of Congress, His Worship Ted Salci, Mayor of Niagara Falls, Ontario and the Hon. Paul Dyster, Mayor of Niagara Falls, New York.

## Background

Widely regarded as the *first* environmental agreement, the 1909 Boundary Waters Treaty was the first international treaty to articulate principles of boundary water resource development, to address cross-boundary pollution and to prohibit the diversion of boundary waters. Further, in establishing the 6-member International Joint Commission to prevent and resolve disputes between Canada and the United States with a mandate of impartiality and balanced representation from both countries, the Boundary Waters Treaty stands apart for its uncommonly good approach to natural resource governance and stewardship. It is this legacy of progressive cooperation and the priceless shared waters for which the Treaty was negotiated that will be the focus of the celebration in the cross-border Niagara region in June 2009.

To enhance understanding and appreciation for the significance of the region's abundant water resources, interests and issues, municipal jurisdictions in Western New York and the Niagara Region of Southern Ontario will be designating 2009 as the Year of Our Shared Waters. Formally being established through municipal legislative resolution, the yearlong focus will ensure that the celebration is grounded in diverse and longer-term educational, cultural, community and municipal learning opportunities as well as multi-faceted engagement with a broad mix of regional partners interested in water. All meetings, events and activities during the Year of Our Shared Waters will be listed on the new website [www.oursharedwaters.com](http://www.oursharedwaters.com)



The International Joint Commission announced its decision to hold the Boundary Waters Treaty Centennial Celebration in Niagara in March 2008. This decision was made in response to a proposal put forward to the International Joint Commission in June 2007 by the Binational Niagara River Mayors Coalition on behalf of the Niagara 10 Leaders (the Cities of Buffalo, Niagara Falls New York and Niagara Falls Ontario, the Towns of Fort Erie and Niagara on the Lake, the Villages of Lewiston and Youngstown, Erie County, Niagara County, and the Regional Municipality of Niagara). The Mayor's proposal highlighted the direct connection between the Boundary Waters Treaty and Niagara, which was one of just two boundary watersheds identified in the Treaty due to concerns related to hydropower generation at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. (Proposal attached.)

Drawing from the recommendations of the Niagara 10 Sustainable Development Agenda which received goodwill assent by the Niagara 10 Leaders in May 2007, the proposal to the International Joint Commission also reflected the important priority given to cross-border regional promotion and tourism development as well as maximizing opportunities related to events of binational significance. The celebration of the Boundary Waters Treaty Centennial in Niagara underscores the historical and current importance of the binational Niagara gateway region to Canada and the United States, while also shining the spotlight on the region's extraordinary natural, industrial, and cultural heritage.

## **June 13 Boundary Waters Treaty Centennial at Niagara Falls**

### **The Celebration**

The Official Ceremony will take place on the Rainbow Bridge from at 10 a.m. on June 13, 2009. Federal, state, provincial and local government officials, IJC Commissioners, Native American and First Nations representatives will all be part of the official program. The ceremony will be attended by boundary water stakeholders from across the Canada-US border, regional political and community leaders, and the media. Real-time coverage of the event is being pursued, as are off-site locations where the public can watch the ceremony.

Centennial Stages are planned for Oakes Garden Theatre (Ontario) and at the Top of the Falls (New York) and the Hard Rock Café (New York) for the afternoon and evening (noon – 10 pm) on June 13, 2009. A targeted mix of local, regional and national performers and distinguished environmental speakers are to be featured. Portable sound, staging and seating will be required on the bridge for this mixed program of political speeches, musical performances.

The location of the Centennial stages will allow for flows across the border throughout the day and evening. Attendance at the Centennial performances will be free and open to the public. The evening's festivities will conclude with a special themed Falls Fireworks display.

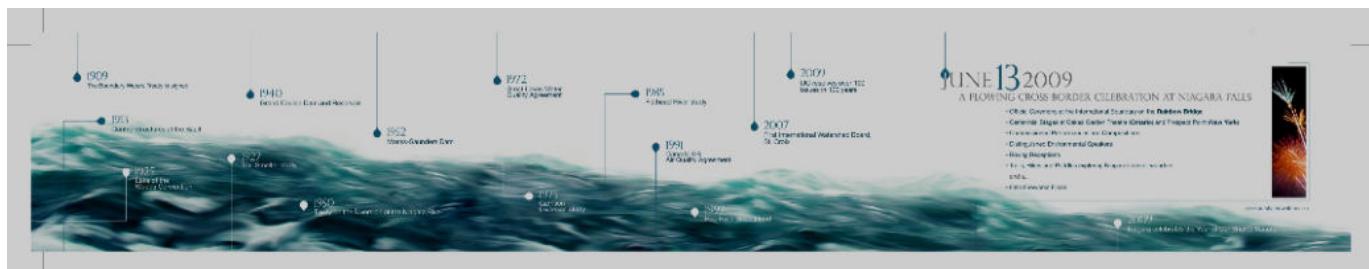
## Promotion

To promote the Boundary Waters Treaty Centennial, a new website [www.oursharedwaters.com](http://www.oursharedwaters.com) along with collateral printed products will be developed and distributed. The existing and heavily frequented websites of the International Joint Commission and many regional Niagara organizations will also promote the BWT100. Further, regional tourism publications and activity guides as well as programs for related water conferences will all announce and publicize the BWT100. A comprehensive media/communications plan is also under development.

Further, the Centennial Celebration is the centerpiece of Boundary Waters Week, which will run from Friday, June 5 – Sunday June 14, 2009. Throughout Boundary Waters Week, the Niagara River Corridor will be host to boundary water-themed conferences and festivals, exhibitions and performances, guided hikes, and tours and more. A Boundary Waters Week Guide will promote the full array of programs occurring across the Niagara region.

## Promotional Brochure

*Released at the State of the Lakes Ecosystem Conference (SOLEC), October 22, 2008, Niagara Falls, Ontario*



## Summary

One hundred years after the signing of the 1909 Boundary Waters Treaty, the founding principles of this historic document continue to guide the Canadian and United States governments in their joint stewardship of transboundary natural resources.

In considering the range of issues currently impacting our Great water resources - from the damage wrought by invasive species, to the loss of critical habitat and wetlands, to the proliferation of new chemicals in our lakes and rivers, and the difficult to predict yet all too certain impacts of climate volatility, - the environmental priority highlighted in the 1909 Treaty must be recognized for its bold and enduring aspiration.

***"It is further agreed that the waters herein defined as boundary waters and waters flowing across the boundary shall not be polluted on either side to the injury of health or property on the other."***

***1909 Boundary Waters Treaty***

This legacy of progressive cooperation between Canada and the United States and the priceless shared waters for which the Boundary Waters Treaty was negotiated will be the focus of the Centennial celebrations and the festivities during Boundary Waters Week. These celebrations are intended to help build regional capacity and coordination around tourism and natural resource management. Overall, this binational project will build regional understanding and awareness of the significance of the Boundary Waters Treaty and to celebrate our shared waters and the communities, societies, and governments, which it connects.

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Celebrate!  
June 13, 2009  
Niagara Falls



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[www.oursharedwaters.com](http://www.oursharedwaters.com)



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## The 1909 Boundary Waters Treaty A Centennial Celebration in Niagara



### 2009: The Year of Our Shared Waters

**Who:** The International Joint Commission (IJC) has accepted a proposal by the Niagara 10 Leaders to host the Centennial celebration of the 1909 Boundary Waters Treaty (BWT) in Niagara Ontario/New York.

**What:** The cross-border Niagara region has designated 2009 the “Year of Our Shared Waters” to commemorate the signing of the historic Boundary Waters Treaty between the U.S. and Canada, signed on January 11, 1909. Many high profile events are planned in the Niagara region to mark the 100th anniversary of the treaty including conferences on water management, water-themed cultural events, and education programs. A full list of activities can be found at: [www.oursharedwaters.com](http://www.oursharedwaters.com) <<http://www.oursharedwaters.com>>

**The “Year of Our Shared Waters” will climax with Boundary Waters Week and the *Boundary Waters Treaty 100 Celebration*. Canadian and American government officials will take part in the centennial commemoration.**

**When:** Boundary Waters Week June 5 - 14, 2009;  
Official centennial celebrations **June 13, 2009**

**Where:** Activities related to the official celebration will take place on the Rainbow Bridge connecting the United States and Canada; the Oakes Amphitheatre (Ontario); and Top of the Falls (NY)

**Why:** The “Year of Our Shared Waters” will highlight the longstanding cooperation between the U.S. and Canada on environmental and resource management issues.

**Background:** “*An uncommonly good treaty*” -- The Boundary Waters Treaty of 1909 established the independent International Joint Commission (IJC) to help prevent and resolve boundary waters disputes between Canada and the United States. The IJC approves applications for projects such as dams in boundary waters and regulates the implementation of projects affecting the boundary waters. The IJC is also tasked under the 1972 Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement to help both governments to restore and maintain the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of boundary waters.



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## Boundary Waters Treaty Centennial Niagara Celebration Committee

### Honorary Chairs

Rick Dykstra, Member of Parliament

Congresswoman Louise M. Slaughter, Co-Chair Great Lakes Task Force

His Worship Ted Salci, Mayor of Niagara Falls, Ontario

Hon. Paul Dyster, Mayor of Niagara Falls, New York

### Committee Chairs

Steve Brereton, Consul General for Canada

John Nay, Consul General for the United States

### International Joint Commission Liaisons

Nick Heisler, Ottawa

Antoinette Cade, Washington DC

Brent Gallaugher, Niagara Falls Bridge Commission

Debbie Whitehouse, Niagara Parks Commission

Mark Thomas, New York State Parks

Dave Heath, Ontario Power Generation

Lou Paonessa, New York Power Authority

Ash Kumar, Environment Canada

Mike Basile, Public Affairs, US EPA

Mary Stack, Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority

Lynda Schneekloth, Buffalo Niagara Riverkeepers

Wendy Canavan, City of Niagara Falls, Ontario

Thomas DeSantis, City of Niagara Falls, New York

Patrick Robson, Regional Municipality of Niagara

Jackie Poulin, Fort Erie Native Friendship Center

Rene Rickards, Tuscarora Nation

Joyce Morocco, Niagara Falls Tourism

John Percy, Niagara Tourism and Convention Corporation

Chris Glynn, Maid of the Mist

Arlene White, Binational Tourism Alliance

Florine Luhr, Advancing Arts and Culture Buffalo-Niagara

Sean Kennedy, Niagara College

Eddie Friel, Niagara University

Doug Draper, Environmental Reporter

Terry Yonker, Co-Chair, Great Lakes Wind Collaborative

Bill Bradberry, Rotary International District 7090

Kathy Lenihan, Office of Congresswoman Slaughter

Sharon Salci, Office of Rick Dykstra

Charles Cole, U.S. Consulate General

Kerry Mitchell, Canadian Consulate General

**Boundary Waters Treaty Centennial Celebration  
at Niagara Falls, June 13, 2009**



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**Centennial Ceremony Program (Tentative Detail)**

Native Drumming

Canada-U.S. Law Enforcement Honor Guard

Arrival of the Official Delegations

Welcoming Remarks from the Honorary Chairs

National Anthems

Haudensaunee Thanksgiving Address

Official Presentations by the U.S. and Canadian Governments

Musical Interlude

Poem of Commemoration

Closing Remarks by the Honorary Chairs

Carillon Bells of Niagara Falls

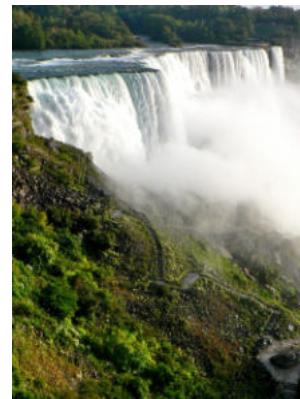
Departing Processionals

Noon – 10 pm      Centennial Stage at Oakes Garden Theatre, Ontario and Top of the Falls, New York (until 6 pm) and Hard Rock Café (NY – from 6 – 10 pm) with national and regional performers

10:00 pm      Centennial Falls Fireworks Display

## International Joint Commission Activities along the Niagara

- Initial 1912 study on water quality conditions
- 1925 order of approval for the construction of a bridge between Buffalo and Fort Erie.
- 1953 IJC established the International Niagara Board of Control to oversee water levels regulation in the Chippawa-Grass Island Pool and installation of the Lake Erie-Niagara River Ice Boom.
- Various international studies have examined factors affecting the scenic beauty of Niagara Falls and the Niagara River.
- Remedial works, first suggested in 1929, were constructed in the 1950s to enhance the scenic beauty, provide for the most beneficial use of the river's waters, and maintain the minimum flows over the Falls required by the 1950 Niagara Treaty.
- International Niagara Control Works, with its 18 sluice gates allow for precise changes in the flow over the Falls, controls water levels in the Chippawa-Grass Island Pool, and excavation and fill on both flanks of Horseshoe Falls.
- The Board monitors operation of the control works by the power entities, Ontario Power Generation and the New York Power Authority, under a Commission directive.
- On June 12, 1969 the waters of the American Falls were dewatered to undertake geological stabilization and analysis
- In 1983, the IJC asked the National Research Council of the U.S. to determine if the Niagara Ice Boom created a cooling of the local climate.
- In January of 1984, the IJC adopted the recommendation of the NRC and directed that “all floating sections of the boom shall be opened by April 1, unless ice cover surveys...show there is more than 250 square miles of ice east of Long Point” and that complete removal of the boom “shall be completed within two weeks thereafter.”
- In 1998, the IJC reviewed Ontario Power Generation’s application to divert water to the Adam Beck power plant via the Niagara Tunnel now under construction to increase the efficient use of the Niagara River.
- The ability to change water levels near Niagara Falls by adjusting gate settings and altering plant diversions has, on numerous occasions, assisted in river rescue operations to save people from going over the Falls.
- During the August 2005 blackout, the IJC’s International



Niagara Control Board suspended water low flow tolerances August 14-16 and August 18-21 due to operations to maximize hydroelectric power generation at Niagara in response to the extensive regional electrical outage.